AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (currently amended): A method of a multiplayer gaming reward system, comprising:

providing a pool of two or more gaming machines;

setting a predetermined award time;

determining whether a current time equals the predetermined award time;

if the current time equals the predetermined award time, selecting one or more of the

gaming machines from the pool ~~at a predetermined reward time~~;

determining whether the selected gaming machine is in use;

determining whether a player has associated a unique player identifier with the selected

gaming machine at the predetermined reward time ~~an operational state of the selected gaming~~

~~machine~~; and

rewarding a player if the selected gaming machine is in use and the player has associated

a unique player identifier with the selected machine ~~responsive to the operational state of the~~

~~selected gaming machine~~ at the predetermined reward time.

2. (original): The method of claim 1, including:

randomly selecting the selected gaming machine.

3. (canceled).

4. (currently amended): The method of claim ~~3~~ 1, including:

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denying a reward to the player if the selected gaming machine is in use and the player has not associated the a unique player identifier with the selected gaming machine at the predetermined reward time; and

communicating to the player that the reward has been denied.

5. (original): The method of claim 1, including:

indicating to a player that the multiplayer gaming reward system is available at one or more of the pool of gaming machines.

6. (original): The method of claim 1, including:

repeating the selection of the gaming machine from the pool at predetermined time intervals; and

predetermining the time intervals based on at least one of: current time of day, current day of week, current day of year, number of gaming machines available, number of gaming machines in use, length that at least one of the pool of gaming machines have been in use, length of at least one prior time interval, awarding of a reward at a previous reward time, identity of selected gaming machine at the previous reward time, presence of players at the gaming machines, number of players at the gaming machines, and available reward value.

7. (currently amended): The method of claim 1, wherein the step of rewarding a player responsive to the operational state of the selected gaming machine includes:

providing the player with a reward of at least one of: cash, player incentive points, and complimentary goods or services.

8. (canceled).

9. (currently amended): The method of claim 1, wherein the step of rewarding a player ~~responsive to the operational state of the selected gaming machine at the predetermined reward time~~ includes:

announcing the reward to the player of the selected gaming machine to at least one other player using at least one of: an indicator associated with the selected gaming machine, an indicator associated with each gaming machine in the pool, and an indicator available to players at gaming machines not included in the pool.

10. (currently amended): An apparatus of a multiplayer gaming reward system, comprising:

a pool of at least two gaming machines~~, each gaming machine having an operational state and~~ being in communication with a central control system; and

wherein the central control system <u>sets a predetermined award time,</u> selects at least one of the gaming machines ~~at~~<u>when the</u> ~~a~~ predetermined reward time <u>equals a current time, determines whether the selected gaming machine is in use, determines whether a player has associated a unique player identifier with the selected gaming machine,</u> and provides a reward to ~~a~~<u>the</u> player of the selected gaming machine <u>if the gaming machine is in use and the player has associated a</u>

unique player identifier with the selected machine~~responsive to the operational state of the~~

~~selected gaming machine at the predetermined reward time~~.

11. (original): The apparatus of claim 10, wherein the central control system randomly

chooses the selected gaming machine from the pool of gaming machines.

12. (canceled).

13. (original): The apparatus of claim 10, wherein the reward is at least one of: cash,

player incentive points, and complimentary goods or services; and the reward is provided to the

player of the selected gaming machine by at least one of: a human attendant, the central control

system, and the selected gaming machine.

14. (canceled).

15. (original): The apparatus of claim 13, wherein the reward to the player of the selected

gaming machine is announced to at least one other player using at least one of: an indicator

associated with the selected gaming machine, an indicator associated with each gaming machine

in the pool, and an indicator available to players at gaming machines not included in the pool.

16. (original): The apparatus of claim 10, including at least one informational indicator adapted to inform a player that the multiplayer gaming reward system is available in connection with one or more gaming machines.

17. (original): The apparatus of claim 10, wherein the predetermined reward time is repeated at predetermined time intervals, the predetermined time intervals being predetermined responsive to one or more of: current time of day, current day of week, current day of year, number of gaming machines available, number of gaming machines in use, length that gaming machines have been in use, length of at least one prior time interval, awarding of a reward at previous reward time, identity of selected gaming machine at previous reward time, presence of players at the gaming machines, number of players at the gaming machines, and available reward value.

18. (canceled).

19. (currently amended): The apparatus of claim ~~18~~ 10, wherein <u>when</u> the selected gaming machine ~~being in the operational state indicating that the selected gaming machine~~ is <u>determined to be</u> in use but the player has not associated a unique player identifier with the selected gaming machine at the predetermined reward time, ~~results in~~ <u>a</u> denial of the reward to the player and communication of the denial to the player<u> results</u>.